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REVIEW OF SECTORAL CLUSTER: LAND, DESERTIFICATION, FORESTS AND BIODIVERSITY

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Overall considerations

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development notes that chapter 10 of Agenda 21, on an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources, 1/ provides an overall framework for the implementation of the entire cluster. While all the chapters are related to land, those on forests and sustainable agriculture are concerned with the sustainable management and use of physical and biological resources, while those on desertification and sustainable mountain development reflect the particular problems of fragile environments; the issue of the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components is of a cross-cutting nature, and includes those concerned with coastal and marine ecosystems. Farmers - men and women - indigenous people, other rural communities and the private sector, as the major stakeholders in the use of land and its related resources, must be the focal points in all the areas of the cluster.

2. Respect for national sovereignty, as well as the need for a comprehensive approach to implementing the recommendations and commitments contained in Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 2/ and the

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1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

2/ Ibid., annex I.

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Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, 3/ are fundamental for achieving sustainable development.

3. National efforts in developing countries to mobilize financial resources for the full and effective implementation of Agenda 21, including its land-related chapters under review, have to be supported by the international community. It is imperative that all financial recommendations and commitments of Agenda 21 be implemented, including those related to the provision to the developing countries of adequate and predictable, new and additional financial resources from all sources. The need for partnership for sustainable development among all countries and better cooperation and coordination among national institutions, international organizations, including international financial institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, including farmers' and rural people's organizations, was underscored.

4. The sharing of scientific knowledge and the transfer of environmentally sound technology, including on concessional and preferential terms as mutually agreed, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 34, are crucial instruments for achieving the objectives of Agenda 21.

5. The Commission on Sustainable Development recommends that high priority be given to the facilitation of practical action for the transfer, sharing, adaptation and development of technology for sustainable resource management in all sectors, at the national and international levels, including under the auspices of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and of international conventions, as appropriate. Such action should include support for a wide range of initiatives, including: (a) capacity and institution building; (b) exchange of information, making use, inter alia, of inventories on eco-technologies in those sectors; and (c) education and training - through the establishment of mechanisms such as environmental technology centres.

6. The Commission on Sustainable Development urges States to sign, ratify, accede to and implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, 4/ the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 5/ and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, 6/ making these Conventions the principal instruments for advancing international cooperation and practical action in their respective fields. The Commission stresses the

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3/ Ibid., annex III.

4/ See United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (Environmental Law and Institutions Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

5/ A/AC.237/18 (Part II)/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex I.

6/ A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

need for the formulation of coordinated approaches towards the implementation of these instruments at the national and international levels, with a view to making efficient use of resources. The Commission further agrees to look into the relationship between work under these Conventions and ongoing work on sustainable development in other related processes in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/111 on the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its second session, the Commission encourages Governments to continue to share their experiences in the implementation of Agenda 21, taking into account recent efforts and initiatives to promote sustainable development at the national, subregional, regional and interregional levels. It welcomes the readiness of some countries to accomplish specific sustainable development goals by means of closer regional cooperation to facilitate the implementation of Agenda 21, and recognizes the importance of regional approaches for the effective implementation of the Conference agreements to support global and national efforts. The Commission calls upon the regional commissions of the United Nations to increase their efforts in support of recent national, subregional, regional and interregional initiatives for promoting sustainable development. It also recognizes the need to strengthen its ties with regional institutions and in particular with the regional commissions. The Commission will continue to review and monitor these regional initiatives aimed at making the transition to sustainable development more effective in all countries and which support appropriate global and national efforts.